

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
 Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of)
)
 Amendment of the Amateur Service)
 Rules to Provide For Greater Use)
 of Spread Spectrum Communication)
 Technologies)

WT Docket No. 97-12

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF THE
AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE, INCORPORATED

The American Radio Relay League, Incorporated (the League), the national association of amateur radio operators in the United States, by counsel and pursuant to Section 1.415 of the Commission's Rules (47 C.F.R. §1.415) hereby respectfully submits its Comments in response to the *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* (the Notice), FCC 97-10, released March 3, 1997. The Notice proposes to amend the Amateur Service Rules, Part 97, to facilitate Spread Spectrum (SS) communications by means of additional spreading codes, and to cause the incorporation of automatic power limiting circuitry to limit power to that actually necessary to carry out the communications. The Notice is based on the League's petition, RM-8737, filed in December of 1995. For its comments on the proposals contained in the Notice, the League states as follows:

1. The Notice proposal is essentially a deregulatory plan to encourage and facilitate experimentation with SS communications in the Amateur Service. The League wholeheartedly supports each of the proposals. The rule changes offer the opportunity to experiment with SS modes, thus to develop practical applications in addition to those already known.

2. In amateur applications, the bands above 420 MHz are presently used principally for narrowband modes. The proposed new rules for SS systems in those same bands will allow experimentation and maximized compatibility between wideband and narrowband communications. The Notice would at once permit experimentation with SS spreading codes that will minimize potential¹ interaction with narrowband communications modes, and also limit power automatically to the absolute minimum necessary to establish and continue the communications. This combination of benefits from the proposed rule changes should be sufficient to minimize any interaction between amateur emission modes. The effect of the automatic power limitation on interference potential is obvious. The relief of restrictions on spreading codes will permit experimentation with a wide variety of spreading codes, thus to determine which are *least* likely to cause interaction with narrowband amateur emission modes. In any case, amateurs are called upon to cooperate in the use of shared frequency bands regardless of emission type. As has always been the case, advance planning and coordination will facilitate harmonious use of both SS and narrowband communications modes. Any fear of interference to voice repeaters or weak-signal communications can and should be avoided by intraservice cooperation in the selection of frequencies, rather than by restricting emission types for SS communications. The latter has served to restrict the ability to experiment with SS communications. The Commission has established the correct presumption in favor of encouraging experimentation while at the same time proposing mechanisms to limit interference potential.

¹ The League, as stated in its petition, RM-8737, is unaware of any instances of interference to amateur narrowband communications from amateur SS communications using the same or adjacent frequencies.

3. That there is interest in experimentation with SS communications is indisputable. However, the bulk of SS experimentation over the past few years has been conducted pursuant to extended Special Temporary Authorizations granted by the Commission. That fact evidences both the overly restrictive nature of the current SS rules, and the effect thereof on SS experimentation and utilization in the Amateur Service. The Notice suggests a modest deregulatory effort, and is properly aimed at increasing the flexibility of spread spectrum users in order to allow the development of compatible systems which maximize spectrum efficiency. The amendment of the rules to permit experimentation is a proper course of action for the Amateur Service, which is a fundamentally self-regulated service that makes its own efficient accommodations for the varied uses of its frequency allocations.

4. The Commission properly has proposed no restrictions on amateur SS operation in order to protect Part 15 devices, which operate at sufferance to licensed services in certain bands. No such restrictions exist relative to other emission modes, and there is no justification for any restriction on any licensed service's use of its own allocations in order to protect SS Part 15 devices. 5. Comments on the League's Petition, RM-8737, variously supported even greater flexibility for amateur spread spectrum operations, or reduced flexibility in order to protect other narrowband amateur operations or certain kinds of unlicensed, Part 15 intentional radiators. In its proposal, the Commission has recognized that these competing objectives have been carefully balanced in the rules proposed therein. The League commends the Commission for its balanced approach and urges that the rules be adopted as proposed at the earliest opportunity.

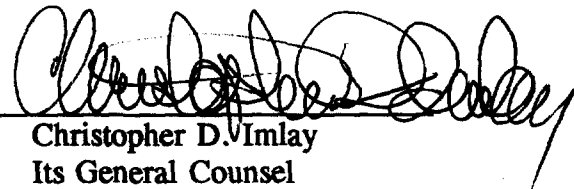
Therefore, the foregoing considered, the American Radio Relay League, Incorporated supports the Notice proposal, and respectfully requests that the Commission move quickly to implement the rules contained in the Appendix B thereto.

Respectfully submitted,

**THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY
LEAGUE, INCORPORATED**

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